

festival has raised more than \$4.5 million for participating charities. Mr. Medlin's influence on the community is tremendous, and the results of his efforts will continue to be felt for years to come.

I am saddened by Gordy's passing and proud to honor his lifetime of service and good work.

VOTER INTIMIDATION

(Mr. PITTS asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. PITTS. Mr. Speaker, a recent news story highlights political appointees at the Justice Department running roughshod over both their civil counterparts and the law itself.

In November, members of the New Black Panther Party for Self-Defense stood in paramilitary uniforms, one of them wielding a nightstick, and intimidated voters at a Philadelphia polling place. The facts are not in question. You can see the video on YouTube. Career lawyers at the Justice Department rightly pursued the case in order to bring charges. They even obtained an affidavit from a prominent civil rights activist who was present and described it as "the most blatant form of voter intimidation" that he had seen, including the voting rights crisis he was a part of in Mississippi in the 1960s. The civil suit filed claimed the individuals engaged in "coercion, threats and intimidation, racial threats and insults, and menacing and intimidating gestures."

Yet now political appointees have stepped in to order the suit dropped. Apparently this Justice Department has no problem with voter intimidation or politicization of justice.

BAYONNE MEMORIAL DAY CO-GRAND MARSHALS

(Mr. SIREs asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. SIREs. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor two very distinguished women for their service in our Armed Forces. Victoria Del Regno served in the U.S. Air Force from 1969 to 1972, and Isabella De Marco served in the U.S. Army from 1993 to 2004 and is currently an active duty reservist. Both women were selected as the Co-Grand Marshals for the Memorial Day parade in Bayonne, New Jersey, in my district. Ms. Del Regno and Ms. De Marco were both born and raised in Bayonne, served as nurses in the military, and both are members of the F.A. MacKenzie American Legion Post 165 in Bayonne.

Mr. Speaker, for the first time in the 91-year history of the parade, two females were selected by the parade committee to serve as Grand Marshals. I am proud that this year's parade honors the service of women in the Armed Forces. These two women and their contributions are outstanding exam-

ples of women who are serving and who have served in our military.

PROTECT MILITARY PERSONNEL FROM HATE CRIMES

(Mr. FLEMING asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. FLEMING. Mr. Speaker, on June 1 two U.S. servicemen were gunned down at an Army recruiting station in Little Rock, Arkansas. Private William Long lost his life in the attack, and another soldier remains in critical condition. Based on the attacker's own statements, these soldiers were targeted because of their affiliation with the U.S. Army. There is evidence that others were being targeted, and this is not the first time.

Under recently passed hate crimes legislation, H.R. 1913, these heroes would receive no additional Federal protections. I think we can all agree that if there is any class of citizens who deserve special protection from political or religiously motivated crimes, it is our men and women in uniform who put their lives on the line each day to protect this country.

So I have introduced House bill 2677, the Military Personnel Protection Act of 2009. This legislation will right this egregious wrong and ensure those who answered our Nation's call to service are extended the same protections afforded to other protected classes of citizens. I urge my colleagues to join me in passing this legislation and extend Federal hate crimes protections to active, Guard, Reserve and retired members of the armed services. That is the least we can do for them.

NBA AGE ELIGIBILITY RULE

(Mr. COHEN asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. COHEN. Mr. Speaker, tonight millions of Americans will tune in to the NBA finals to watch a great battle between Kobe Bryant and Dwight Howard. Besides immense talent, these gentlemen share another characteristic—they went straight to the NBA from high school. Unfortunately, today's players won't have that same opportunity because the NBA prevents 18-year-olds from choosing their profession and going straight into the NBA simply because of their age. It's something that you don't see in any other sport, baseball, golf, tennis, hockey, any other sport. You don't see it in entertainment, and you don't see it when young men and women choose to join the military and fight for their country. This is part of a hypocritical system that we have which doesn't allow these people to choose their profession when they come out of high school, and it makes the term "student athlete" an oxymoron. The system does more to serve the needs of the universities and the NBA, which uses them as a farm system, than to serve the educational

interests and needs of the students themselves.

Kobe Bryant and Dwight Howard have achieved outstanding success, and I look forward to watching them tonight. But there is no reason to think that today's 18-year-olds can't do the same. Age restriction should be abolished. The NBA should repeal this unfair rule.

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FREE EGYPTIAN BLOGGER KAREEM AMER

(Mr. KIRK asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. KIRK. Mr. Speaker, I rise to call on Egypt to demonstrate that it is a force for tolerance in the Arab world by releasing Kareem Amer from prison.

A young human rights activist, Kareem Amer, was sentenced in February of 2007 to rot in prison for 4 years based solely on what he wrote on his blog. He is the first blogger of the Arab world to be jailed completely for his Internet comments. And his only crime was criticizing extremists who persecute women and minorities.

We have a unique opportunity to right this injustice. President Obama should call for the release of Kareem to protect the free speech of all of us on the Internet.

The Egyptian Government is heavily subsidized by the U.S. taxpayer. Americans are going through tough times and would not be happy supporting a regime that set a precedent that put the first blogger in jail solely for promoting tolerance. Egypt should not stand out as a repressive regime that stifles Internet speech. That is why Kareem Amer should be released from prison before the President leaves Egypt.

HONORING THE LIFE AND SERVICE OF NAVY COMMANDER DUANE WOLFE

(Mrs. CAPPS asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend her remarks.)

Mrs. CAPPS. Mr. Speaker, I rise today with a heavy heart to honor the life and service of my constituent, Navy Commander Duane Wolfe. Commander Wolfe died Monday, May 25, at Al Asad Air Force Base in Iraq. He was killed by a roadside bomb.

Mr. Speaker, words can't describe the loss felt throughout our California coastal communities by Commander Wolfe's death. He was truly a pillar in his community, spending the majority of his life on the central coast with his wife of 34 years, Cindi, and their beautiful family. Commander Wolfe served in Iraq as a Seabee. He worked at Vandenberg Air Force Base as a civilian for over 20 years and served as well as a deacon of the Los Osos Church of Christ.